

THOMAS CHRISTIE examined. (No. 6.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What are you?—A farmer.
2. *Mr. Reid.*] And you are a ratepayer?—Yes.
3. You did not sign the petition produced, but certain other petitions?—Yes.
4. How long have you been in the district?—I have been in the district nearly all my lifetime—for fifty-three years, and I remember the 1868 flood. My land is on the river-bank, and is something like Mr. Palmer's. In the 1868 flood there was no water on that, and our cattle went there all the time. Since the bank was built on the opposite side it throws the water on to our side and floods the whole place. I have only a narrow space between the hills and the river, and of course it makes a regular river-bed of it. In the last flood we had, about eighteen months ago, there were from 4 ft. to 6 ft. of silt left on a good part of a paddock there. I have sowed that with grass-seed three different times, and the wind keeps blowing the seed away.
5. You are in the rating district?—Yes.
6. And what would you like to see done in order to put you right?—The only thing is to put me out of the district.
7. Do you want compensation?—We have very little chance of getting it, I think.
8. But you would like it?—Yes.
9. Can you say anything with regard to the silting-up of the river?—Yes. I do not think the river is silting up opposite my place. I know of a snag or stump opposite my place that was there when the "Betsy Douglas" was running up the river. That stump stands there the same to-day as it did forty years ago. It is out of the water and in the same position, and if the river was silting up it would be covered. At low water you can see the stump, so that I do not think the river is silting up at Allanton.
10. What was the highest flood-water on your land during last flood?—It varied from 4 ft. to 6 ft. and 10 ft.
11. Do you know anything of the cut they call the "New Cut" down there?—Yes, that is up in the Silverstream.
12. What is the effect of that cut, do you know?—I could hardly tell you.
13. How are you classified?—In Class "B"—the same as Mr. Palmer.
14. And you are liable to pay up to within a fraction of 4s. per acre?—Yes.
15. Would reclassification of your lands into Class "D" be sufficient for you?—Well, no; we want to get out of it altogether, because the next Board may reclassify us again, and put us into Class "A."
16. *Mr. Witty.*] What amount of rates are you paying now?—It was 6d. an acre.
17. And previous to the new Board you were paying nothing?—We were in no Board at all.
18. *Mr. Forbes.*] In talking about the silting-up of the stream, does the Board propose to do anything in regard to deepening it in any way?—Not that I am aware of.
19. Do you think if it was deepened it would have the effect of getting the storm-water away?—I do not think it would—the tide still comes up fast. If the tide affects it it does not matter if it is 100 ft. deep.
20. The worst time is when the tide is in and meets the flood-waters?—Yes.
21. *Mr. Witty.*] You say that if you were put in Class "D" you may be reclassified again; but that would depend on the men put on the Board?—Yes.
22. You would be at the mercy of the men on the Board at any time?—Yes.
23. *Cross-examined by Mr. MacGregor.*] With regard to the last question, if you were put into Class "D," so long as you remained in that class you would not be liable for rating?—That is so.
24. Would you have any reason to fear being removed into another class so long as it remained the same—that is, so long as the Board decided to do nothing for your benefit? Have you any reason to fear that?—Well, I could hardly say.
25. You cannot state any reason why you should fear being classed again?—The next classifier coming round may take a different view of the thing.
26. That is the only thing you have to fear?—Yes.
27. Now, with regard to the depth of the river, you mentioned a stump?—Yes.
28. Do you remember the days when the schooners used to go up as far as Allanton?—Yes, I think so. I do not mean some of the big ones.
29. What distance are you from Allanton?—About a quarter of a mile.
30. You are not in the East Taieri District?—No.
31. Then Allanton is practically under the East Taieri District?—Yes, it is.
32. And you are not in any way affected by the Silverstream?—No.
33. The conditions in your part of the district are entirely different from the conditions existing in the East Taieri or North Taieri?—Yes.
34. *Mr. Reid.*] In 1862 was the time you remember the steamers coming up?—Yes.
35. Was there a clear river then?—Yes.
36. Was any mining going on up in the Taieri district then?—No.
37. The silt has been coming down from the mining operations?—Since then, yes.
38. *Mr. Allen.*] The boundary of your subdivision of this drainage district is Allanton on the one side, or is it not so near Allanton?—No, my property is the first start of the Momona Sub-division.
39. You are on the upper boundary of the Momona Sub-division?—Yes.
40. Is it not the fact that that subdivision includes a few properties on the eastern side of the river and a great many properties on the west side of the river?—Yes.
41. *Mr. Reid.*] There is a subdivision known as the Momona, is that so?—Yes.